NATIVES GATHERING THE COROZO NUT.

VEGETABLE IVORY,

OR

SPECIMEN NUTS OF THE IVORY PLANT.

This substance is the albumen (perisperm) of the seed of a small species of palm growing in the valleys of the Andes, whence it is now imported in very considerable quantities into this country. HUMBOLDT first drew attention to its hardness and whiteness, and the uses to which it is employed by the natives of the districts in which it grows. It is called the "niggers'-head tree," on account of the form and size of the large black drupaceous fruit in which the seeds are contained. The fruit consists of several cells, in each of which is contained four seeds. The seeds are covered by a tough fibrous testa, which, on being removed, exposes the albumen, which represents the soft meat of the cocoa-nut and the seeds of other palms. At one end of the seed is a little cell, in which is enclosed the embryo. which seems to germinate without effecting any change in the condition of the hard mass by which it is surrounded. This is not the only palm whose seeds are hard enough for the uses of the turner, although the only one which is employed extensively for this purpose. The botanical name of the plant yielding these seeds is *Phytelephas Macrocarpa*, and the order to which it belongs is that of *Palmeæ*. It is a good substitute for ivory, and far supersedes it in colour, being of a delicate transparent white. The Indians cover their cottages with the largest leaves, and the English manufacture all kinds of fancy articles of the nut. The ornaments made from this substance exhibited in the Exhibition, 1851, Class XXVIII, which consisted of a variety of objects turned with great skill, obtained for the Manufacturer a Prize Medal, and also a copy of the Reports by the Juries on the subjects of all the different Classes into which the Exhibition was divided.

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